

RECOGNIZING THE RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVAL OF DIWALI

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 747) recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 747

Whereas Diwali, a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and the people of India, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains throughout the United States and the world;

Whereas there are more than 2,000,000 Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains in the United States;

Whereas the word "Diwali" is a shortened version of the Sanskrit term "Deepavali", which means "a row of lamps";

Whereas Diwali is a festival of lights, during which celebrants light small oil lamps, place them around the home, and pray for health, knowledge, and peace;

Whereas celebrants of Diwali believe that the rows of lamps symbolize the light within the individual that rids the soul of the darkness of ignorance;

Whereas Diwali, falling on the last day of the last month in the lunar calendar, is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving and the beginning of the new year for many Hindus;

Whereas for Hindus, Diwali is a celebration of the victory of good over evil;

Whereas for Sikhs, Diwali is feted as the day that the sixth founding Sikh Guru, or revered teacher, Guru Hargobind ji, was released from captivity from the ruling Mughal Emperor; and

Whereas for Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha or liberation by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras, who were the great teachers of Jain dharma, at the end of his life in 527 B.C.: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) during this time of celebration, in order to demonstrate support for Indian Americans and the Indian Diaspora throughout the world, recognizes Diwali as an important festival;

(2) acknowledges the international religious and historical importance of the festival of Diwali;

(3) recognizes and appreciates the religious diversity in both India and the United States and throughout the world;

(4) acknowledges and supports the new relationship of collaboration and dialogue in international efforts between the United States and India; and

(5) in observance of and out of respect for the start of Diwali, the festival of lights, acknowledges the onset of Diwali and expresses its deepest respect to Indian Americans and the Indian Diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Our colleague and my friend, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, introduced this resolution that seeks to recognize the significance of the festival of Diwali. Diwali is celebrated as victory of good over evil for some, and as a remembrance of liberation for others. Ultimately, it is a day of joy celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains throughout the world, particularly by Indians and Indian Americans.

With more than 2 million devotees of these faiths in our country, this resolution honors this holiday and those who cherish its message.

There are few religious holidays that are celebrated by a multitude of faiths, and it is a tribute to the diversity of India and to our country that we have such a rich religious heritage in our societies. By celebrating Diwali, we also are celebrating this diversity, a shared value that has brought the United States and India closer together through the years.

Much has been said about our two countries being natural partners in this world; and the importance of having multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and, indeed, multi-religious societies cannot be overemphasized.

For these reasons, I look forward to celebrating this festival and strongly support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 747, which recognizes the significance of the festival of Diwali.

I want to extend my appreciation to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for his leadership on this issue and so many issues that are affecting U.S. relations with India and Indian Americans.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know because of our previous speaker, Diwali is a major, multi-cultural festival celebrated in India and everywhere around the world. Although often referred to as a Hindu festival, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists also observe it.

Known as the Festival of Lights, it symbolizes the victory of good over evil, and lamps are lit as a sign of celebration and hope for mankind.

Diwali is celebrated for 5 consecutive days in October or November, and it is one of the most popular and eagerly awaited festivals in India. This celebration presents all of us with the opportunity to reflect on the many ways in which people, history and traditions of India, and elsewhere in South Asia,

have contributed to the rich cultural mosaic that is the United States of America. It also reminds us again that America's extraordinary diversity is one of our Nation's most enduring strengths.

I was proud to sponsor a similar resolution in the 109th Congress, House Resolution 584, which also recognizes the significance of this important festival of Diwali.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as the proud sponsor of House Resolution 747, I am pleased that this legislation recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali has been brought to the floor today for consideration.

Celebrated by the people of India, the Indian Diaspora and the nearly two million Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains who call America their home, the Diwali festival is a five day event held in the fall that celebrates the values of kinship, knowledge, and goodness. It signifies the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. This is commonly represented by individuals lighting oil lamps and placing them outside their homes.

My resolution acknowledges the international, religious, and historical importance of the festival of Diwali as well as the religious diversity in India, the United States, and throughout the world. It shows our support for the strong and growing partnership and dialogue in international efforts between the United States and India. Lastly, it recognizes the importance of Indian Americans—a strong and vibrant immigrant community.

As co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, as well as a lifelong supporter and admirer of the Indian American community, I am grateful for the opportunity to show my appreciation. My father served in India during World War II, and he told me how entrepreneurial and competent the people of India are. I call on my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to do the same for the citizens of India, a strategic and economic ally.

I would like to commend Ishani Chowdhury with the Hindu American Foundation, my Chief of Staff Dino Teppara, my Legislative Assistant Paul Callahan, and Arshi Siddiqui with Speaker NANCY PELOSI's office for their cooperation and dedication in bringing this important resolution to the floor.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests, so I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 747.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further

proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1545

SUPPORTING THE OBSERVANCE OF BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 230) supporting the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 230

Whereas every 3 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer;

Whereas another 180,510 new cases of breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in the United States in 2007;

Whereas breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women between the ages of 45 and 54;

Whereas 1 out of every 8 women who live to the age of 85 will develop breast cancer in her lifetime;

Whereas the survival rate of women who have breast cancer is 98.1 percent when detected in the early stages;

Whereas mammograms and monthly breast self-examinations are the key components of early detection; and

Whereas observing a Breast Cancer Awareness Month would provide a special opportunity to offer education on the importance of monthly breast self-examinations and annual mammograms: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in order to provide a special opportunity to offer education on the importance of monthly breast self-examinations and annual mammograms;

(2) salutes the more than 2.4 million breast cancer survivors in the United States and the efforts of victims, volunteers, and professionals who combat breast cancer each day;

(3) recognizes and applauds the national and community organizations for their work in promoting awareness about breast cancer, providing information, and offering treatment to its sufferers; and

(4) urges organizations and health practitioners to use this opportunity to promote awareness about breast cancer, to support monthly self-examinations, and to encourage annual mammograms.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 230, a resolution supporting the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As an original cosponsor of this resolution, I am proud to speak out in favor of greater support for breast cancer awareness and prevention. Through my work with Congresswoman SUE MYRICK in reauthorizing the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, I am well aware of the challenges that lie ahead in preventing and ultimately finding a cure for breast cancer.

As my colleagues may know, breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women between the ages of 45 and 54. Many of us have witnessed a family member or a friend struggle with the devastating effects of breast cancer. We must ensure that these women do not suffer alone.

With this resolution, we affirm our solidarity with the 2 million-plus breast cancer survivors as we seek to find a cure for this and other cancers. We also pay tribute to the volunteers and health care professionals who work to combat breast cancer every day.

H. Con. Resolution 230 supports the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to reemphasize the importance of monthly breast self-examinations and annual mammograms. As in the case of many diseases, early detection goes a long way toward ensuring survival. As many of my colleagues know, approximately 98 percent of women who are able to detect breast cancer in its most early stage survive. We must use this opportunity to educate women, all women, to ensure that they take the necessary steps to protect themselves from this potentially fatal disease.

I also rise to pay tribute to our friend and our colleague, Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis, who lost her life to breast cancer earlier this month. We are reminded that breast cancer can strike anyone. This resolution also expresses our gratitude to national and community organizations, such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, that have made us all aware of the power of the pink ribbon, been on the forefront in raising awareness about this disease and provided information to better understand this disease.

I also want to thank my colleague Representative GINNY BROWN-WAITE and the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues for their leadership on this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to offer my resolution on the House floor today, House Concurrent Resolution 230, supporting the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The effects of breast cancer have touched almost every American, whether through losing a loved one, as

I did, or going through the pain of chemotherapy and a long recovery, as millions of individuals have done.

I introduced this resolution to support the breast cancer education and outreach efforts that have taken place this October. We all know that every 3 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer and that this is the leading cause of death among women between the ages of 15 and 54. However, if this disease is detected early, the breast cancer survival rate is 98 percent.

Congress must continue to promote breast cancer awareness and support efforts to defeat this disease. My resolution expresses support for the observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is this month of October. The resolution provides a special opportunity to offer education on the importance of monthly breast self-examinations and annual mammograms. My resolution also salutes the 2.4 million breast cancer survivors in the United States and the efforts of victims, volunteers and professionals who combat breast cancer every day.

Finally, this measure applauds the national and community organizations for their work in promoting awareness about breast cancer. A woman's risk for developing breast cancer increases if family members have a history of breast cancer, particularly at an early age. However, 85 percent of women who develop breast cancer have no known family history of the disease.

It cannot be stressed enough that early detection is the best chance for survival of a person who has a breast cancer diagnosis. Women must take care of their health and be aware of their risk factors, perform self-examinations and get annual checkups. While breast cancer predominately affects women, we are regularly reminded that a significant number of men are diagnosed with breast cancer each year.

My colleague, Ms. BALDWIN, mentioned Jo Ann Davis. Jo Ann Davis certainly was a very, very brave lady who fought breast cancer. Actually, she fought it twice. She won the first time, and it came back. We all remember her in this Chamber and we remember her desire to make sure that a cure is found. If Jo Ann Davis were here today, she would not only vote in favor of this, but she also would be speaking on behalf of it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative BALDWIN and the 129 Members who co-signed this very important piece of legislation with me. I certainly urge all Members to support H. Con. Res. 230 to ensure that the House continues to bring awareness to this important issue.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support this very important resolution. Observing Breast Cancer Awareness Month gives us an opportunity to educate the